



# News Release

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## **Vaccine exemption rates for school entry drop due to new state requirements**

*Kindergartners more protected from disease that vaccines can prevent*

**OLYMPIA** — Washington's rate of exemption from vaccines required for school has dropped significantly in the first year since passage of a law that changed the parental opt-out process. Kindergarten exemption rates for required immunizations dropped to 4.5 percent for the 2011-2012 school year compared to 6.0 percent in 2010-2011 and 6.2 percent in 2009-2010.

"I'm pleased that this rate is headed in the right direction because more kids are protected from diseases that vaccines can prevent," said Secretary of Health Mary Selecky. "Disease can spread quickly in schools and the whooping cough epidemic is a reminder about how serious these diseases can be."

Under the new law, parents seeking an exemption must get information from a health care provider about the benefits and risks of vaccine before the provider signs an exemption form. A Certificate of Exemption form is required for most types of exemptions. Information about [the law](#) ([www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/Immunize/](http://www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/Immunize/)) is available online.

Kids with exemptions tend to cluster geographically, often living in the same areas, going to the same schools. [Many parts of our state](#) ([doh.wa.gov/cfh/immunize/schools/schooldatarprts.htm](http://doh.wa.gov/cfh/immunize/schools/schooldatarprts.htm)) have high exemption levels that create pockets of under-vaccinated kids at risk of outbreaks. Studies have shown that schools with higher exemption rates have higher rates of diseases like measles and whooping cough.

All recommended vaccines for Washington children under age 19 are provided at no-cost through the state's Childhood Vaccine Program. Health care providers may charge an office visit fee and a fee to give the vaccine, called an administration fee. People who cannot afford the administration fee can ask their regular health care provider to waive the cost.

— More —

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For help finding a health care provider or an immunization clinic, call your [local health agency](#) (doh.wa.gov/LHJMap/LHJMap.htm), visit the [ParentHelp123 resource finder](#) (<https://resources.parenthelp123.org/>) or call the [Family Health Hotline](#) ([www.parenthelp123.org/resources/family-health-hotline](http://www.parenthelp123.org/resources/family-health-hotline)) at 1-800-322-2588.

The [Department of Health website](#) ([www.doh.wa.gov](http://www.doh.wa.gov)) is your source for *a healthy dose of information*. Also, [find us on Facebook](#) and [follow us on Twitter](#).

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